

# ROUTE 50 CORRIDOR

## *DESIGN GUIDELINES*

January 4, 2007



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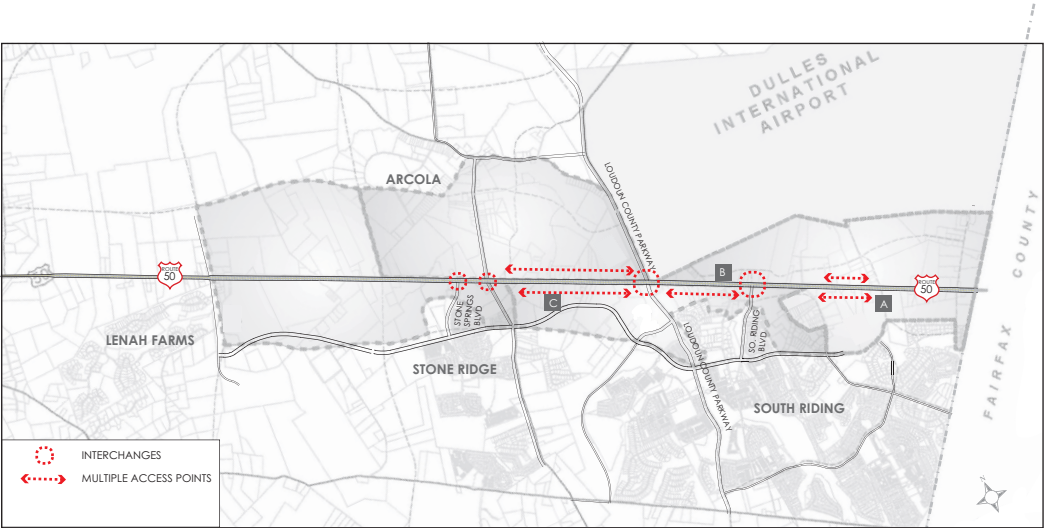
BACKGROUND

The Route 50 corridor study area is located between the Fairfax/Loudoun County line and Lenah Road. The study area extends to the north and south to include the area of a planned parallel road network and is bordered by Dulles International Airport and existing residential communities. In this area, current land uses include a range of commercial and industrial uses with an emerging retail presence near its newer planned residential communities.

The Route 50 corridor is a gateway to Loudoun County; it links the Washington metropolitan area with southern Loudoun County and visitor destinations in western Loudoun County. For this reason, the Route 50 Task Force was formed to identify issues and make recommendations to help create an attractive entrance gateway.

The task force identified limited landscaping, minimal buffering along the roadway, a variety of uncoordinated signage and fencing, and unscreened storage and parking areas. A number of existing homes and business have direct access to Route 50 resulting in frequent intersections and access points. Structures are sited at inconsistent distances from the roadway and vary in scale, material and form. As a result, the corridor lacks a coherent visual theme and does not create a sense of arrival in Loudoun County. The task force recommends the establishment of a gateway theme to create a unified feel and image on the corridor.

BACKGROUND



Route 50 Corridor study area in Southern Loudoun County





## METHODOLOGY

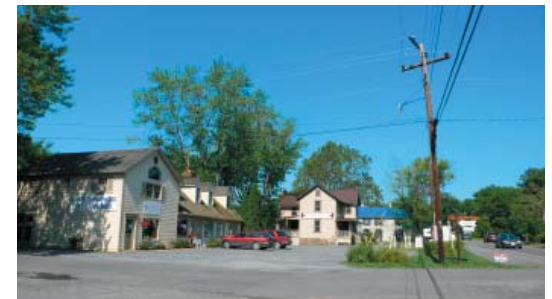
The Route 50 Corridor Design Guidelines are based on Loudoun County's building traditions. The settlements of Loudoun County were compact towns and villages set in a scenic landscape. A town or village acted as a community center; providing goods, services and opportunities for social interaction in a well-connected activity cluster. The settlement pattern is exemplified by the town of Middleburg and the village of Aldie - two visitor destinations on Route 50.

Loudoun County encourages a similar pattern of mixed use development – the guiding principle is the relationship between circulation and activity. An effective mixed use development creates a concentrated activity node, not a diffused strip. The goal is to create urban clusters, stimulate pedestrian activity, and create spaces of interaction.

The Route 50 Corridor Design Guidelines illustrate the type of development that is desired on the Route 50 corridor by presenting general design principles with clear goals and strategies. Suggestions for the implementation of the guidelines are organized in two sections: *Existing Development* and *New Development*. *Existing Development* is intended for owners and designers planning site or building improvements to existing structures. *New Development* provides basic design guidance for new development.

*The Route 50 Corridor Design Guidelines are not intended to address every issue and will not be applicable in every circumstance. The intent is to provide developers, owners and reviewers with the guidance and flexibility to achieve the goals of the community. The guidelines provide some specific recommendations but are not a substitute for the requirements set forth in the Zoning Ordinance and Comprehensive Plan. Each project must follow all relevant ordinances and policies.*

## METHODOLOGY







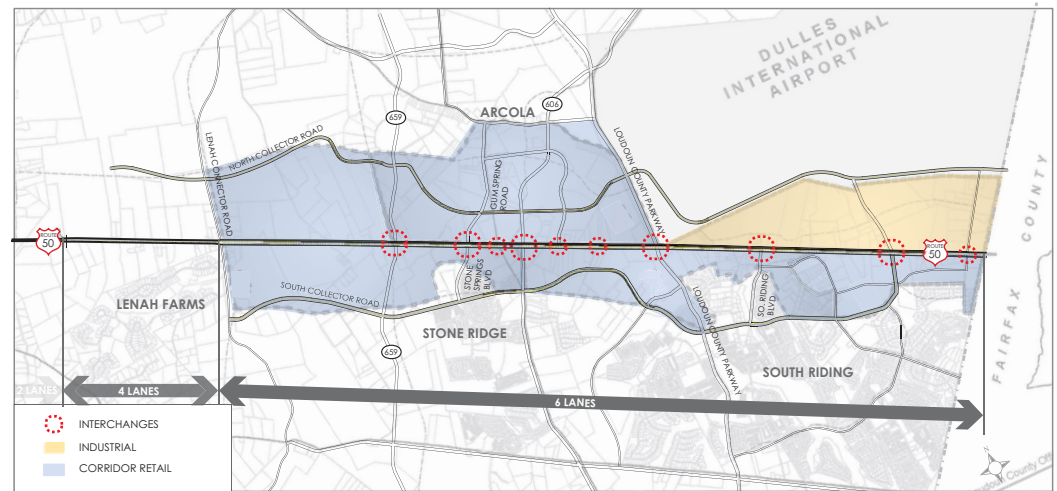
Route 50 is a heavily traveled roadway, the construction of additional travel lanes and upgraded interchanges is underway. Route 50 will become a limited access thoroughfare; north and south collector roads will provide access to parcels fronting the roadway. The parallel road network will also create alternate circulation routes to increase connectivity and reduce traffic volume.

The Route 50 corridor is envisioned as a mixed use district with unified development of complementary scale, material and form. Landscape and architectural guidelines will support this effort by creating consistency and transition to promote a sense of place.

Landscape improvements will create a *boulevard* environment on the Route 50 Corridor. The *Loudoun County Gateway Guidelines* provide planting details and site elements for buffer setback planting opportunities for existing and future development. Canopy trees, stone site walls, board fencing and smaller plantings will frame the Route 50 corridor, creating a sense of enclosure and transition to mark Loudoun's Entrance Gateway.

The *Route 50 Corridor Design Guidelines* address architectural issues for new and existing structures. The guidelines provide suggestions for continuing the gateway theme with building arrangement and design. Site and building arrangements will frame open space to create a transition from corridor to neighborhood and building design will reinforce a sense of enclosure and provide a transition to human-scale.

*Note: The Route 50 Task Force Landscaping Recommendations were addressed as part of a zoning ordinance amendment which was adopted on September 12, 2006. Please refer to ZOAM 2006-0002 for the adopted language in Section 5-1400 of the ordinance which requires specific buffering and landscaping treatment for the Route 50 corridor.*



Route 50 Corridor Transportation Plan





## GOALS AND STRATEGIES

The Route 50 Corridor Design Guidelines are intended to achieve three basic design goals with a series of related strategies:

### 1 Create a *sense of arrival* in Loudoun County.

- Create gateways at points of entry and transition.
- Use landscape and building arrangement to mark a transition from corridor to neighborhood.
- Use building design to provide transitions from neighborhood to pedestrian scale.

### 2 Reinforce a *sense of place* with architectural design.

- Use design elements of complementary scale, material and form to create visual connections.
- Use compact development to enclose and define space.
- Create streetscapes with building and landscape arrangements.
- Reduce parking impact to bring attention to building design.

### 3 Unite new and existing development to create a functional and visually pleasing corridor.

- Create pedestrian friendly environments; consider human-scale and opportunities for community interaction.
- Mix and connect uses to create self-sustaining neighborhoods.
- Use shared community amenities such as public art, plazas or landmarks to create connections.
- Extend streetscapes to connect public destinations with residential areas.

## GOALS AND STRATEGIES





## ***IMPLEMENTATION : EXISTING DEVELOPMENT***





## OVERVIEW

Each of the existing buildings on the Route 50 corridor is distinct. The buildings were developed individually and for specific uses. The result is a range of structures that vary in size, function and appearance. The relationship of existing structures to the Route 50 corridor also varies and is changing. The expansion of Route 50 has brought the roadway closer to existing structures and the development of parallel collector roads will result in new access points for existing parcels. For this reason, the key strategies for improving existing development will be to address site and orientation issues.

The guidelines illustrate a range of possible improvements, from the addition of simple screening devices to complete changes in appearance and orientation. Factors of building type and function, project goals and budget will impact the level of change. The individual nature of existing parcels and structures may preclude physical connections with new development - but each structure should reinforce the goals of the community and create a connection to its neighborhood.

The goal for existing buildings is to:

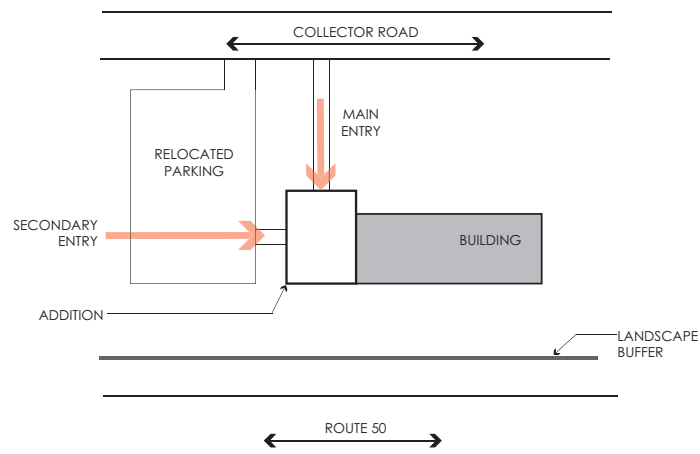
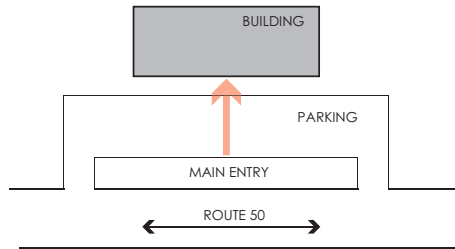
- Convey a sense of human scale
- Use high quality materials and construction
- Provide pedestrian amenities at walkways
- Emphasize the main entry elevation and coordinate all elevations

## OVERVIEW



IMPLEMENTATION: EXISTING DEVELOPMENT

## SITE IMPROVEMENTS



- 1 The orientation of existing buildings may shift to planned collector roads. Consider relocation of the main entry and parking to connect to the planned road network and neighborhood.

## SITE IMPROVEMENTS

Planned transportation improvements will change site circulation on existing parcels. This creates an opportunity to relocate parking and service areas to less prominent locations and provide screening.

This chapter provides suggestions for site improvements including:

- Building Orientation
- Parking
- Service Areas
- Site Elements

## BUILDING ORIENTATION

A building is perceived to have front, side and back elevations. The 'front' of the building is the main elevation and entrance, orientation refers to the direction it faces. The orientation of existing buildings may shift with planned transportation improvements changing the direction of access and making side and rear elevations more prominent.

### 1 A building may have more than one orientation if the site has street frontage on two roadways.

- The elevations should be composed in hierarchy to respond to its orientation. The primary entrance should be located on the most prominent elevation from the access roadway.
- A secondary entrance may be oriented to minor roadways, interior blocks or parking lots for convenience.



## PARKING

A key strategy for the improvement of the Route 50 corridor is to reduce the visual impact of parking. The goal is to accommodate parking needs but avoid the look of strip development with extensive parking. The perception of parking scale is moderated by concealing or screening portions of parking areas with building and landscape.

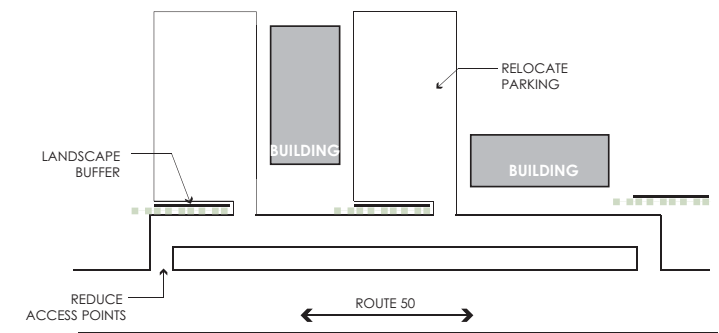
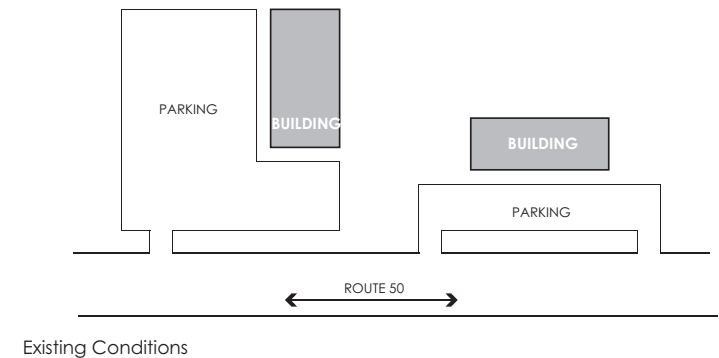
### 1 Reduce the visual impact of parking areas.

- Parking areas should not front on main collector roads or Route 50. If possible, relocate a portion of parking to the side and back of buildings.

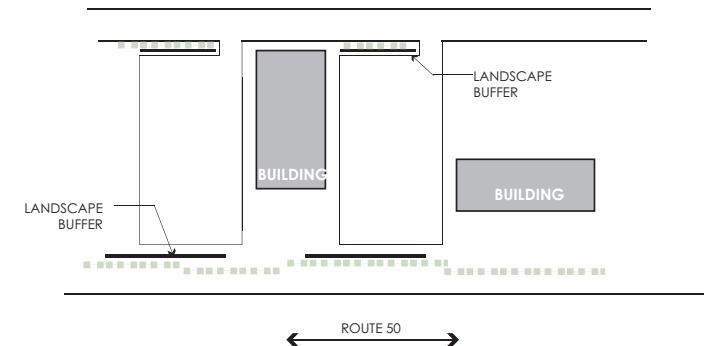
### 2 Use landscape to screen and buffer parking areas.

- Provide a landscape buffer at the perimeter to screen parking areas from adjacent developments and roadways.
- Divide a large parking lot into sections with landscaped dividers. Add a landscaped path or groups of shade trees to delineate parking sections.

## SITE IMPROVEMENTS



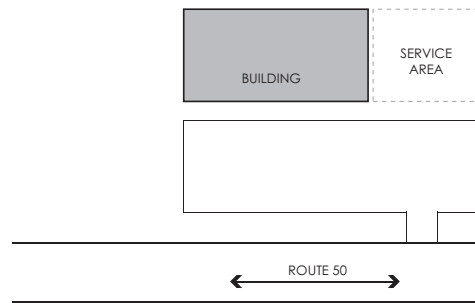
- 1 Relocate parking to minimize visual impact, reduce access points to Route 50.



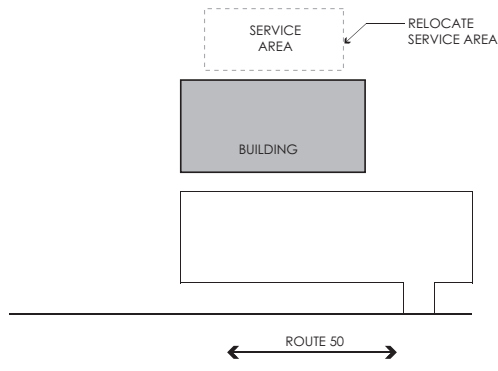
- 2 Create access to new collector roads and use site elements and landscape to screen parking areas.

IMPLEMENTATION: EXISTING DEVELOPMENT

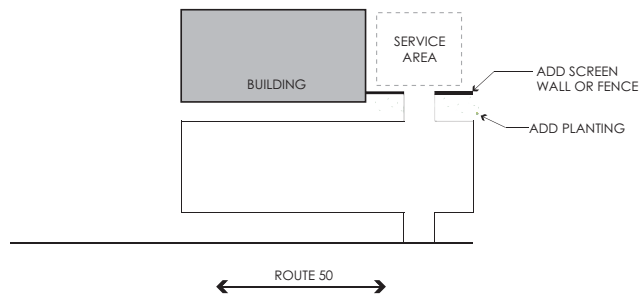
## SITE IMPROVEMENTS



Existing Conditions



- 1 Relocate service areas to minimize visual impact.



- 2 Use site elements to screen service areas.

### IMPLEMENTATION : EXISTING DEVELOPMENT

## SERVICE AREAS

A number of sites on the Route 50 corridor have extensive outdoor storage areas. In some cases, support areas are screened with fencing or clusters of storage buildings. In a few cases, loading and storage areas, on-site utilities, mechanical units, and garbage containers are in clear view of the corridor. Relocating, organizing or screening service areas will improve the appearance of the corridor and existing business with little impact to site or building function.

### 1 Reduce the visual impact of service areas from roadways and adjacent development.

- Mechanical equipment, service or storage areas and trash receptacles should not have frontage on main roadways or be visible from the main elevation.
- If possible, relocate service areas to an area which is not publicly visible.

### 2 Service areas and mechanical units should be screened from view.

- A wall compatible with the building finish and design may be used to define and screen a support area. The wall should adhere to architectural guidelines for material and articulation.
- Use site elements and landscape to screen service areas and mechanical units located at ground level.
- Rooftop Mechanical Units should be screened by architectural features compatible with the building façade and architecture.

## SITE ELEMENTS

The Loudoun County Gateway Guidelines call for planting and site elements to create a sense of enclosure and mark the entrance to Loudoun County. Landscape improvements and buffer setback plantings along the Route 50 corridor will create common site elements between existing and future development. Common site elements provide continuity and help connect and transition incompatible structures, functions, or new and existing development. Site elements can also provide effective screening for parking, and service areas.

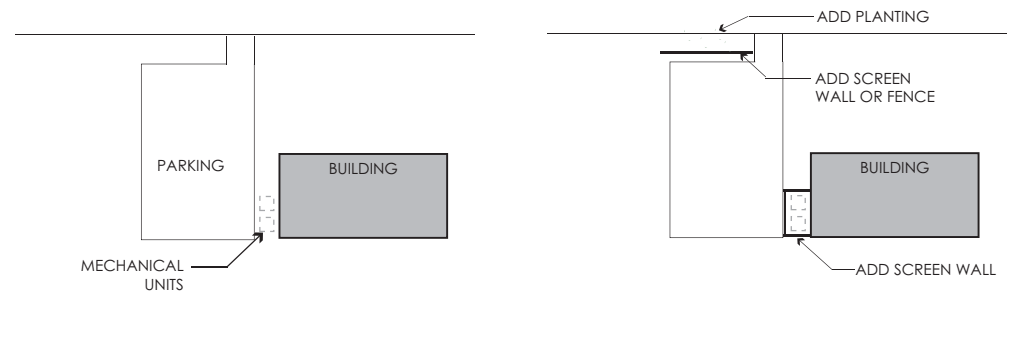
### 1 Site walls, fencing and screen walls should be consistent with design guidelines for buildings.

- The design of site elements should be consistent with the building design in scale and material.
- Avoid a blank screen wall, elements longer than 50 feet should be divided with piers or landscaping at an interval consistent with the adjacent buildings.
- Preferred fencing materials are specified in the Landscape Guidelines.

### 2 Use site elements to create buffer zones and screens.

- Use site walls or fences, and planting to screen service areas, outdoor storage and utilities.
- Use plantings to define the edges of open spaces and parking areas.
- Use a landscape buffer between incompatible uses or buildings.

## SITE IMPROVEMENTS

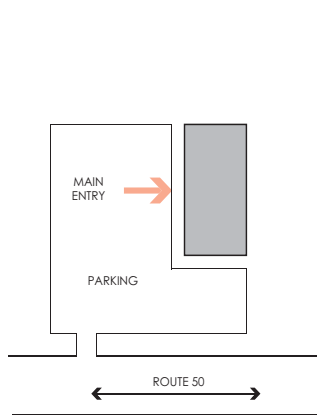


- 1 Use site elements to screen service areas, mechanical units and site utilities.

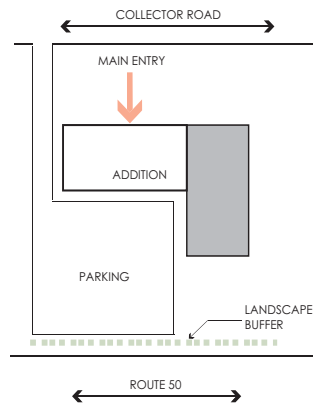


- 2 It may not be feasible to create visual connections between building that vary in scale and orientation. Use a landscape buffer between incompatible building types if an architectural transition is not possible.

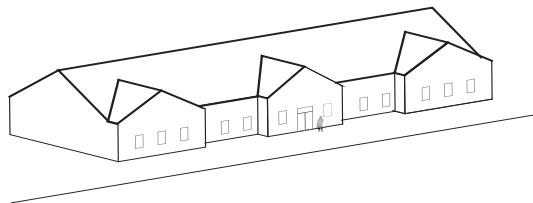
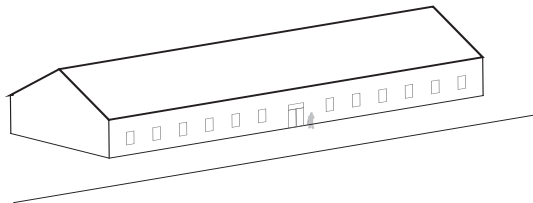
## BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS



1 Existing Conditions



Plan additions to bring existing buildings into conformance with the design guidelines. An addition may be used to reorient an existing building to new roadways and screen parking and service areas.



2 Create variation in wall surface, roofline and form with building modules. Appropriately scaled building modules help moderate the scale of large buildings.

## BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS

Existing development on the Route 50 corridor consists of individual structures that vary in scale, material and form. The goal for the corridor is to create a consistent feel to link new and existing development. It is not necessary - or desirable - for every structure to look the same. The strategy is to create visual relationships with complementary scale, material and form. The following suggestions are based on the notion of conveying human-scale as the common scale of new and existing development.

General suggestions are provided concerning the topics of:

Form & Roofline  
Façade

### FORM & ROOFLINE

The following suggestions refer to form and roofline changes to help create a sense of scale and transition between new and existing development.

- 1 **Plan additions to bring existing buildings into conformance with design guidelines.**
  - Coordinate the arrangement of building additions with proposed development and transportation improvements.
- 2 **Avoid long expanses of wall or roof on large-scale buildings.**
  - A long expanse of roof should be avoided, divide roof form with dormers, cupolas, or a change in roof line.
  - Create variations in wall surfaces to visually divide a large form into smaller modules.
  - A change in roof form or height can be used to emphasize an entrance or create a covered walkway.

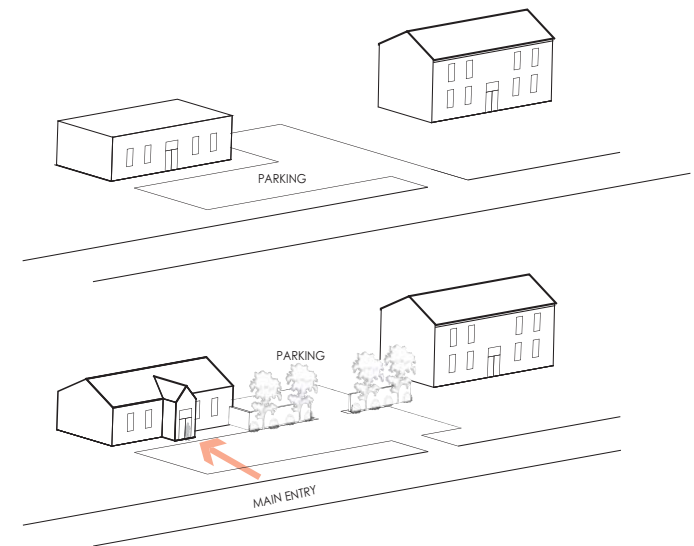
### 3 Replace a flat roof with a sloped roof.

- The addition of a sloped roof to a one story building with a flat roof increases its visibility. It may also be used to screen mechanical equipment and improve the appearance of a structure.
- A sloped roof may be used as a transitional element to link developments of varied scale and function.

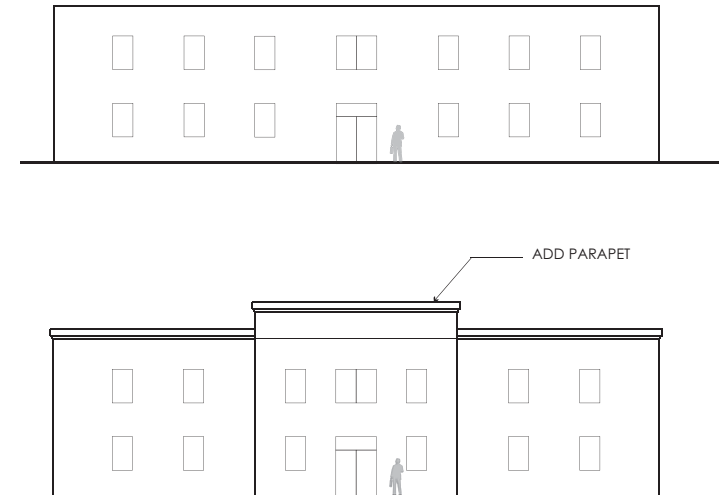
### 4 Articulate the elevation of a flat roof building with a parapet or cornice detail.

- Elevations should be articulated to create a base, middle and top. A contrasting cornice creates a top edge of the building.

## BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS

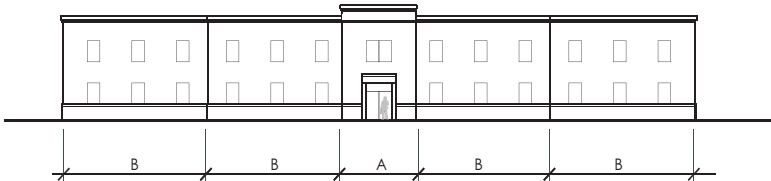
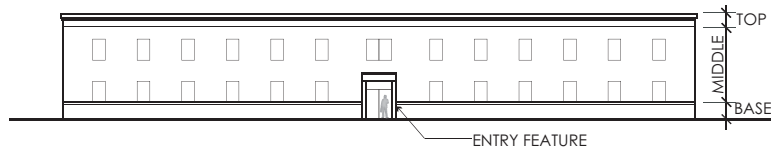
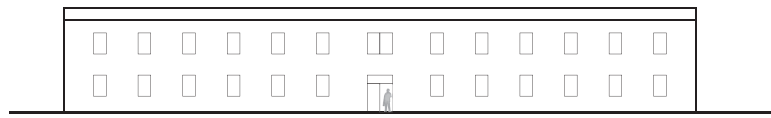


- 3 The addition of a sloped roof may be used to create a transition to adjacent development.

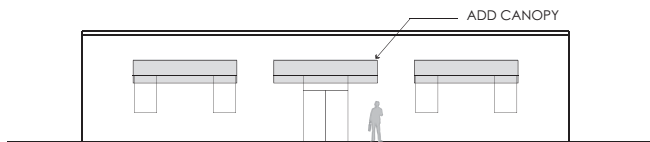
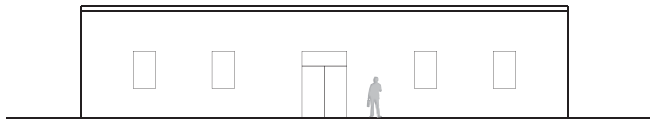


- 4 The addition of an extended parapet highlights the building entrance. The vertical division defines the building mass as three separate elements and create a sense of scale.

## BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS



- 1** The addition of architectural detail provides scale and defines a base, middle and top of building. An entry feature highlights the main entrance and lends human-scale.



- 2** The addition of an awning emphasizes the primary elevation by creating a pedestrian zone near the entrance. Awnings create a horizontal line that articulate the building facade.

### IMPLEMENTATION : EXISTING DEVELOPMENT

## FAÇADE

The addition of architectural detail is an effective strategy for creating human-scale elements. Suggestions for facade development are organized in two topics:

- Articulation
- Building Entrances & Windows
- Material & Color

### ARTICULATION

Articulation refers to the use of architectural detail to highlight distinct components of a building design. The contrast of different materials or building components creates a defining line or joint contributing to an overall sense of scale. When architectural details and joints are properly placed a sense of human-scale is created.

#### 1 Revitalize blank walls with the addition of detail and openings.

- Articulate facades to create a base, middle and top. Delineate the base, middle and top of a building with contrasting materials and elements such as water tables, wall and eaves or cornices.
- Each elevation should be constructed using similar colors, materials, windows and decorative accents as the main elevation.

#### 2 Create human scale with architectural details.

- A covered walkway creates a pedestrian scaled zone and reinforces movement. An arcade or awnings can be added to an existing building without major architectural changes and helps to create depth, contrast and interest in a façade.
- Contrasting horizontal elements break down the height of walls. Vertical elements, such as exterior piers or columns, create divisions in long walls.

## BUILDING ENTRANCES & WINDOWS

The design of building openings is a civic gesture. The entry of a building should be prominent, identifiable and create an entrance transition. A hard to find entrance or building without windows does not welcome visitors or connect with adjacent development. Consider the placement and proportion of openings to create connections to adjacent development, new roadways and to highlight a building entry.

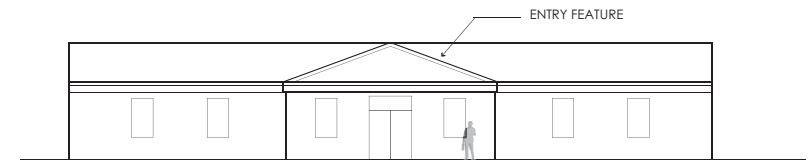
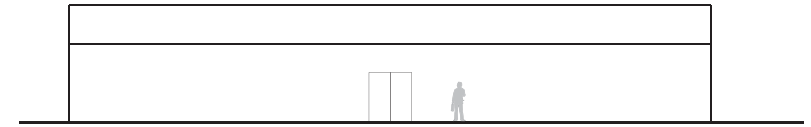
### 1 Clearly define the primary entrance.

- An entry feature creates a transition area and highlights the main entrance.
- An awning or roof feature can be used to create an entry feature.
- Paving or other decorative elements help reinforce an entry feature.

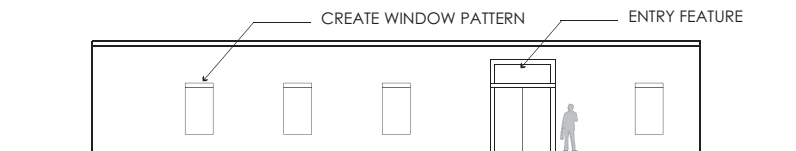
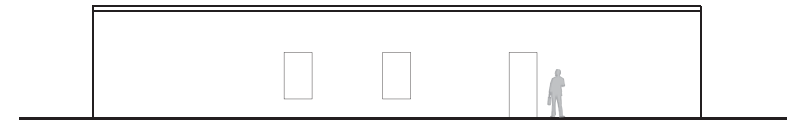
### 2 Create a consistent pattern of openings that reinforces the primary entrance.

- A regular pattern of openings and prominent entry is consistent with the design heritage of the area; traditional window proportions are square or vertical.
- Proportion openings to create a hierarchy that emphasizes the main elevation and entrance.

## BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS



- 1 Create an entry feature with the addition of a roof feature or variation in form.



- 2 Creating a consistent pattern of openings helps to define the primary elevation and main entry.

## BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS



- 1** Natural and durable materials, such as stone and brick, are preferred. Similar materials, such as split face block and finished concrete, may also be used.



- 2** Each elevation should be constructed with the same or similar materials and details.



- 3** Revitalize a building facade by adding elements of contrasting materials and colors.

## MATERIAL & COLOR

Material and color define the appearance of a building and the feel of the neighborhood. The use of natural and durable materials like brick, stone and wood is preferred because they convey a sense of permanence and tradition. These materials also provide texture, pattern and contrast which contributes to an overall sense of scale. A similar look may be achieved with more modern materials such as split-face block, finished concrete, and metal. In addition they contribute texture, pattern and contrast which helps to provide scale.

- 1 Replace discouraged or deteriorated materials with preferred materials.**
  - Clad or replace standard concrete block, metal siding and unfinished concrete with natural stone, brick or wood siding.
  - Matte surfaces are preferred; highly polished, glossy or reflective surfaces should be replaced or repainted.
- 2 Each elevation should be constructed using similar materials and details.**
  - Secondary elevations and additions should be consistent with the existing structure in material, color and texture.
- 3 Revitalize a building façade with the addition of contrasting materials or colors.**
  - The addition of contrasting materials and colors may be added to provide scale and visual contrast.

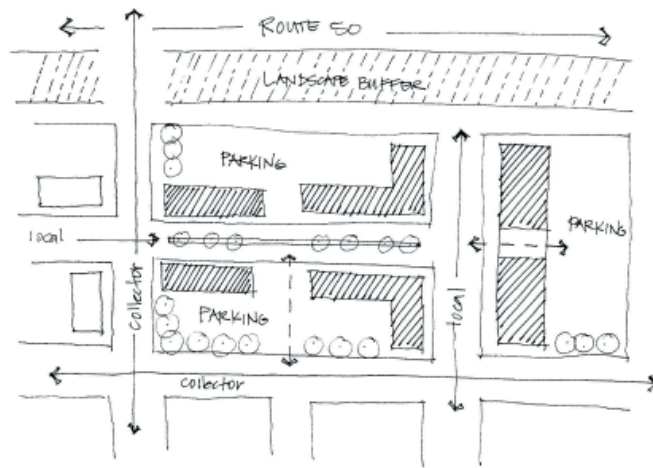






## ***IMPLEMENTATION : NEW DEVELOPMENT***

## OVERVIEW



1 Main Street Pattern

## OVERVIEW

Loudoun's Entrance Gateway will be marked with canopy trees, stone site walls, board fencing and smaller plantings to frame the Route 50 corridor and create a boulevard environment. Route 50 will become a limited access thoroughfare and access to parcels fronting the roadway will be provided by north and south collector roads. As a result, development along the Route 50 corridor will be visible from multiple directions. The following recommendations should be considered for buildings and parking areas which are visible from Route 50, main roadways and neighboring development.

The Route 50 corridor is envisioned as a mixed use district with unified development of complementary scale, material and form. The goal for the Route 50 corridor is to create pedestrian oriented development and reinforce a sense of place. A sense of place implies a distinct place but is not strictly an issue of design; activity and community interaction make places vibrant and attractive. To achieve this goal, new development should focus on building neighborhoods rather than individual structures. Development should be planned to connect to neighboring areas with streetscapes and walkways and to use architectural elements of complementary scale and form.

A key strategy is to create development in mixed-use activity centers rather than individual structures or strip developments that distribute visitors and activity along roadways. Development patterns illustrate how site and building arrangements can frame open space to create a transition from corridor to neighborhood and reinforce a sense of place.

## DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

Development patterns should utilize compact building arrangements to frame streetscapes and screen parking and service areas. The goal of compact development is to create vibrant, pedestrian oriented, mixed-use development that promotes community interaction. Compact development also utilizes valuable land efficiently and preserves open space for parks, trails, landscape buffers and other civic spaces. The following examples illustrate sample development patterns; other options may be developed.

### 1 Main Street

- A landscaped avenue is the core element of the *Main Street Pattern*. Buildings are arranged parallel to the roadway to define a streetscape and conceal parking and service areas behind the building. Frequent pedestrian connections are provided to parking and neighboring development.

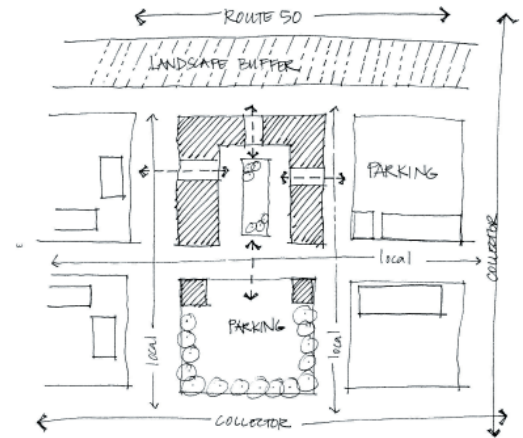
### 2 Plaza

- A central plaza is the core element of the *Plaza pattern*. Buildings are arranged to define a central plaza. Parking is located behind buildings and screened by landscaping. Pedestrian connections are provided to parking, across roadways, and neighboring development. A variation on the plaza pattern would be to locate the plaza at the end of a street to create a terminating view.

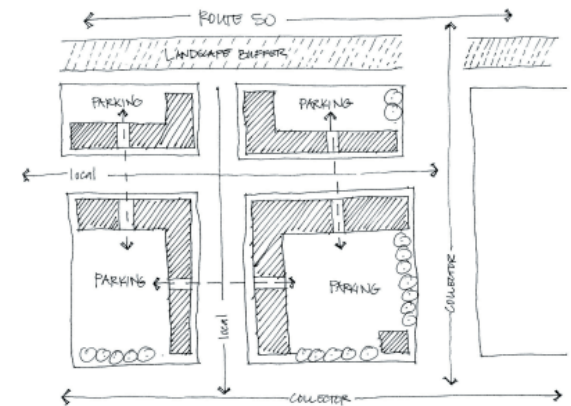
### 3 Commercial District

- Local streets are the core element of the *Commercial District Pattern*. Buildings are arranged parallel to the roadway to define a streetscape and conceal parking and service areas behind the building. A concentration of retail and other public functions promotes activity in a defined area. Pedestrian connections are provided by the continuation of local streets to neighboring development.

## OVERVIEW

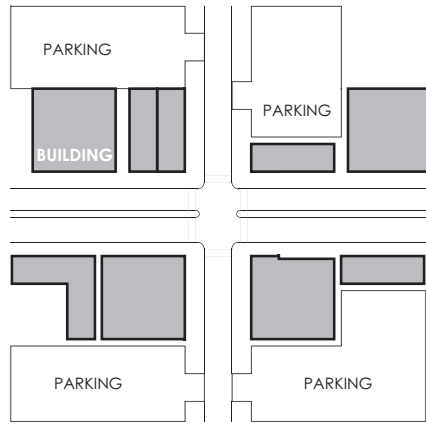


2 Plaza Pattern



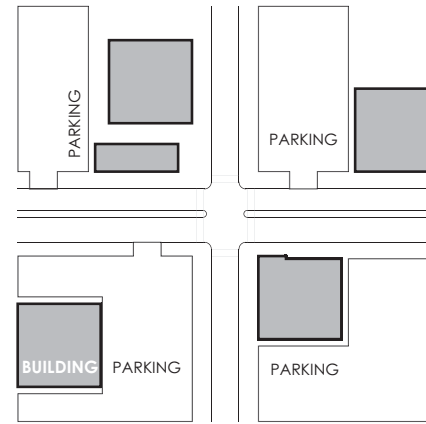
3 Commercial District Pattern

## SITE DESIGN



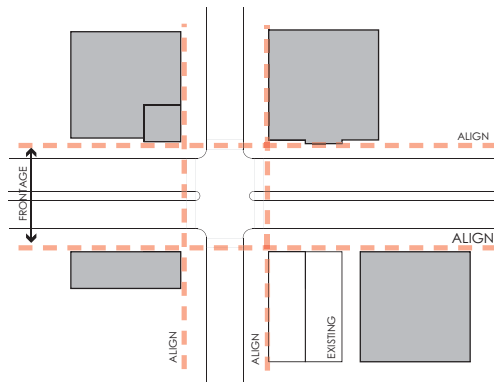
### 1 DO THIS

Use building mass to define corners and street walls.



### AVOID THIS

Parking is more prominent than buildings. Buildings are not aligned at the corners or along the street.



### 2 Align buildings to create a continuous street wall.

## SITE DESIGN

The placement of site elements is essential to their function and contributes to the quality of new and neighboring development. This chapter provides guidance for site design with recommendations for:

- Building Arrangement
- Streetscape
- Parking
- Service Areas
- Site Elements

### BUILDING ARRANGEMENT

Building arrangement refers to the basic issues of site and building design: setback, orientation, and composition. The arrangement of buildings defines the appearance of a community and establishes open space. A coordinated building arrangement may be used to connect neighboring developments or new and existing construction.

#### 1 Building setbacks should be limited to allow building design to define the area.

- Avoid the placement of large parking lots or other open spaces at the street edge. Try to create a continuous street wall with a contiguous building arrangement.
- The primary elevation of a building should be oriented to main roadways with automobile access to the side and back of the building.

#### 2 Limit setback variation to connect neighboring development.

- Align building setbacks on adjacent parcels and across streets where possible to reinforce the composition of buildings.
- New development should have similar setbacks and orientation to adjacent existing structures.
- In transitional areas, buildings which accommodate different functions should have similar setbacks.

**3 Building should be arranged to relate to adjacent buildings and developments.**

- In large mixed-use developments, a portion of the development or an entrance should be oriented to adjacent development.
- Large developments should provide for the continuation of pedestrian paths from adjoining neighborhoods or local streets.
- Avoid orienting service areas to the primary elevation of adjacent development.

**4 Use a compact building arrangement to encourage pedestrian circulation.**

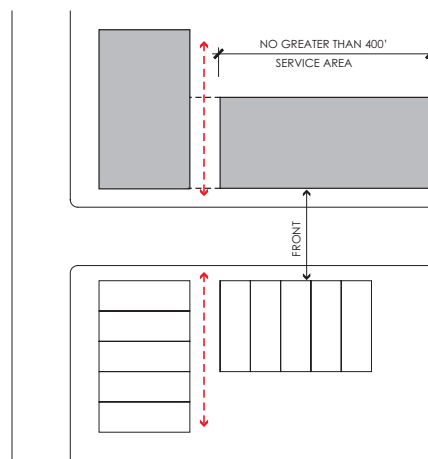
- Align buildings at the sidewalk edge to reinforce a pedestrian zone.
- Provide breaks in large buildings at a distance no greater than 400', to create pedestrian paths.

**5 Building arrangement should be used to define gateways.**

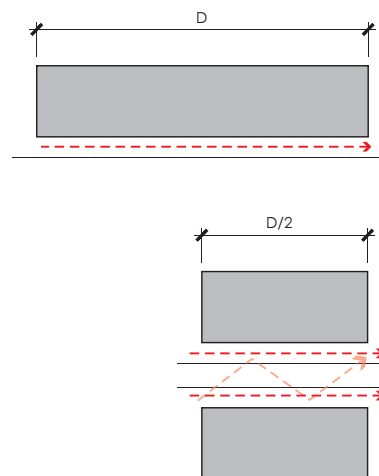
- The corners of a major intersection or transition require distinct design to promote the gateway theme. Buildings or signage should orient to the corner and create a variation in the street wall.
- Align buildings with similar design elements across roadways to create a gateway. Design elements should be similar but not identical, a variation may be used to highlight an important entrance or corner.

**6 Arrange building to frame a common square or plaza.**

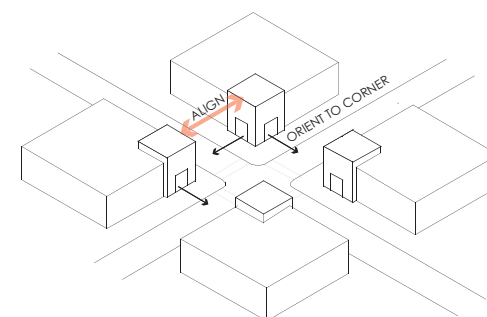
- Consider the relationship of buildings to open space when composing building arrangements. In a mixed-use development, appropriately scaled plazas can function as a transition or public amenity.
- Building arrangement can be used to frame a significant view. Compose buildings to create a visual termination at a notable structure or landscape feature.



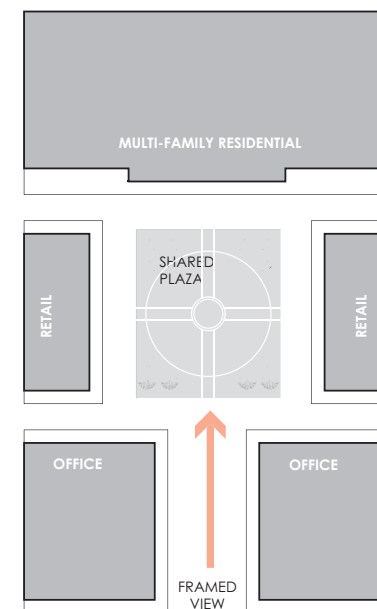
- 3** Provide a pedestrian path in large developments. Orient at least one entrance to existing development.



- 4** A compact building arrangement encourages walking between businesses and intensifies activity at the streetscape.

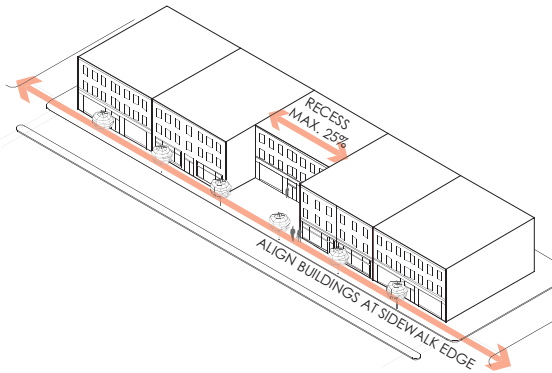


- 5** Use building mass to create an entrance feature or gateway at the corners. Orient building to the corner to reinforce the gateway.

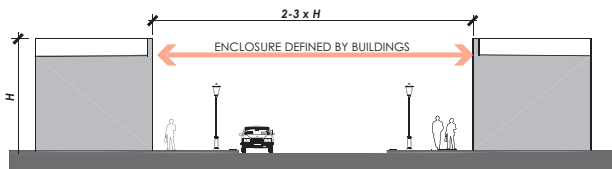
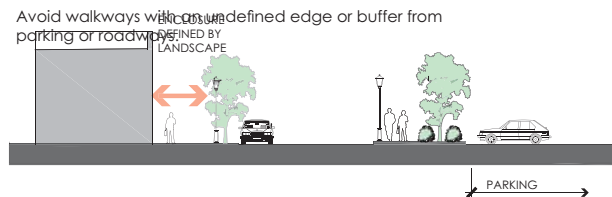
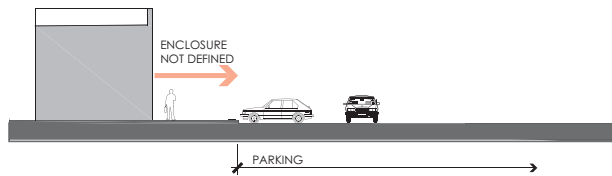


- 6** Use building arrangement to frame views and open space. A shared plaza creates a transition between uses.

## SITE DESIGN



- 1 Align building to create a continuous street wall.



- 2 Use building arrangement and landscape to define a streetscape enclosure.

## STREETSCAPE

Streetscape refers to the design of walkways at buildings and roadways. A well designed streetscape contributes to a sense of place by creating a vibrant public space and a distinct image of the area. The space of the streetscape is defined by the proportion and arrangement of the buildings, roadways and landscape that frame it. Streetscape elements - such as lighting, signage and furniture - also contribute to the look and feel of the streetscape.

### 1 Compose buildings and landscape to define the streetscape.

- Align buildings at the edge of the sidewalk to create a contiguous street wall. A portion of the wall, up to 25%, may be recessed to define a courtyard or building entrance.
- If possible, define both lateral edges of the streetscape with continuous buildings or landscape.

### 2 Consider the scale of the streetscape.

- Proportion building height and roadway width to create a comfortably scaled streetscape. The ideal streetscape is two to three times as wide as the building height.
- If both edges of a streetscape are not defined by buildings, consider a planting strip at the sidewalk edge to create a landscape enclosure.
- Avoid pedestrian walkways with undefined edges, create a landscape buffer to separate automobile traffic and parking from pedestrians.



**3 Define activity zones with changes in material and texture.**

- Use contrasting materials or textures to define walkways, plazas, cafes and other seating areas.
- Reinforce the pedestrian walkway by using a consistent material on walkways and crosswalks.
- Gateways and entrances may be marked with a signature design feature. Consider a distinct paving, planting, signage and public art.

**4 Use streetscape elements that reinforce the design theme.**

- Provide lighting and street furniture along the streetscape.
- Provide shade trees at sidewalk edges and median planting where appropriate.
- Use coordinated streetscape elements throughout a development to reinforce the connection between uses.

**5 Articulate the ground floor level of buildings to encourage pedestrian activity.**

- Include pedestrian oriented amenities such as storefront displays, covered walkways or canopies and outdoor seating.
- Include signage that is mounted for pedestrian view
- An increase in building height is preferable to an expansive footprint to reduce walking distances and intensify street activity.



**3** Material changes are used to define walkways, green space and transitions in this plaza.

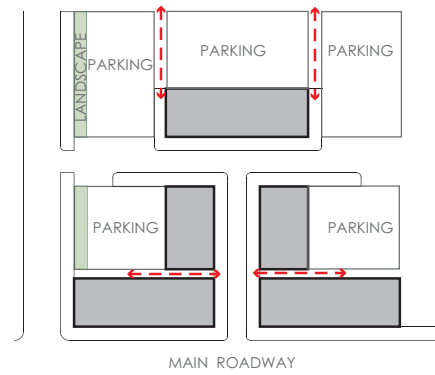


**4** Distinct streetscape elements, like these green light fixtures and street furniture, add character to the streetscape.



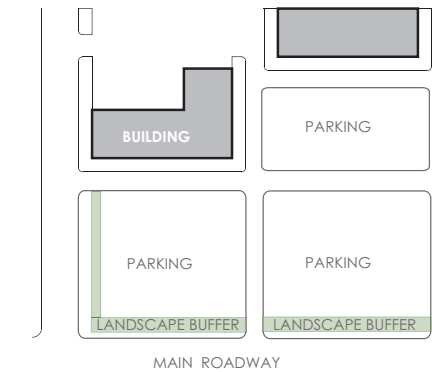
**5** Encourage pedestrian activity by articulating the ground floor level, providing awning and signage mounted for view from the walkway.

## SITE DESIGN



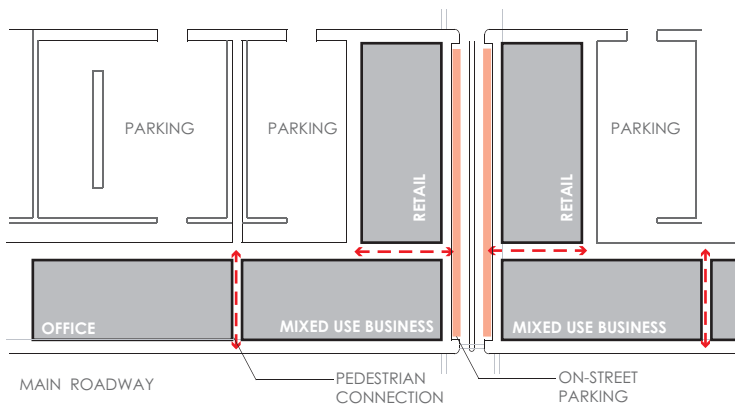
### 2 DO THIS

Buildings are directly connected to walkways and define the street edge. Parking is placed at the side and rear of buildings and are screened from the main roadway.



### AVOID THIS

When parking is placed between the building and the roadway, the parking lot is emphasized and building visibility is decreased.



### 3 Parking demand may be met by using a variety of parking types including on-street and shared parking areas.

## PARKING

A key element of compact site design is the placement of parking. Large surface parking areas and other open spaces detract from the streetscape and building design. The following recommendations are intended to accommodate parking and reduce its visual impact.

### 1 Create a parking plan that uses a variety of parking types to meet demand.

- Verify parking demand and provide for average parking needs in the immediate building area. Use overflow lots for peak parking needs in less visible locations.
- Consider shared parking plans between adjoining properties that do not share peak parking demand hours.
- On-street parking encourages roadway activity but also acts as an effective traffic-calming device.

### 2 Locate a portion of parking out of view.

- Large parking areas should not front on main roadways. Provide a limited amount of parking between the building and street with overflow parking at the side and back.
- When parking is placed along a roadway, provide a low wall or fence to define the edge of the parking area.

### 3 Reduce the scale and impact of parking areas.

- Large surface parking lots should be divided into smaller, multiple lots to reduce their visual impact. Portions of parking may be screened by buildings, screen walls and landscape.
- Divide a large parking lot into sections with landscaped dividers. Parking sections may be arranged to negotiate natural topography or a landscaped path may be used to provide pedestrian circulation.

**4 Consider pedestrian use in and around parking areas.**

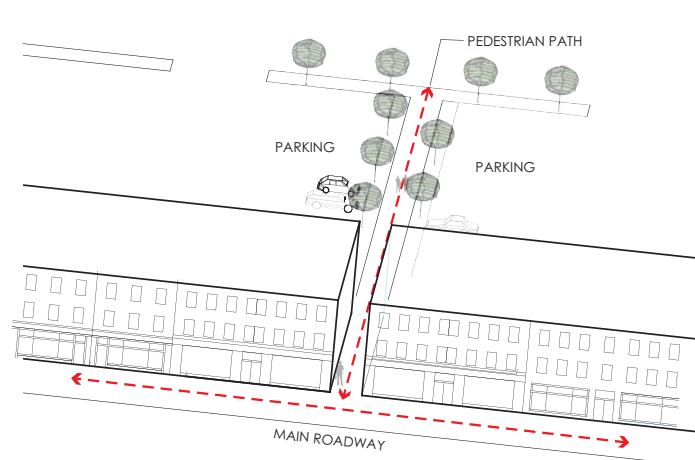
- Provide for pedestrian circulation by creating paths and crosswalks from parking areas to the main entrance.
- Consider pedestrian paths and connections to neighboring development when planning parking.

**5 Use landscape to screen and buffer parking areas.**

- Provide a landscape buffer at the perimeter to screen parking areas from the street and adjacent developments.
- Provide shade trees in parking areas and at pedestrian paths. Avoid isolated single trees, a group of trees or planted aisle is more effective.
- Consider size and orientation in the placement of shade trees to achieve adequate shading during the summer months.

**6 Consider a combination of screening devices to conceal parking areas.**

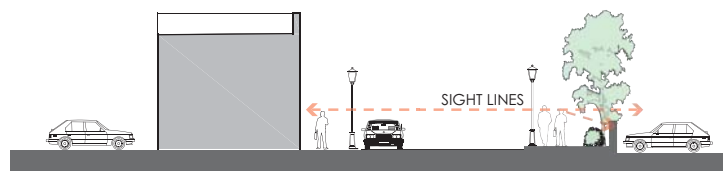
- Building arrangement can effectively screen parking from roadways.
- Site walls provide screening and reinforce the street edge.
- Dense, low-level landscaping or berms screen parking areas and allow for uninterrupted views



- 4** Provide dedicated pedestrian paths to main entrances from parking areas and neighboring development

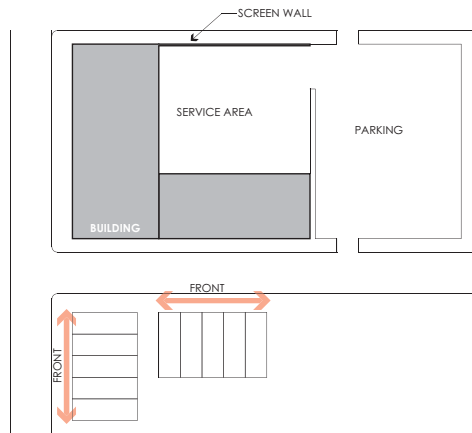


- 5** A landscaped pedestrian path provides helps to shade and divide a large parking area.



- 6** Provide screening for parking areas from public walkways and main roadways. Building arrangement, site walls and landscaping are effective screening devices that may be used in combination

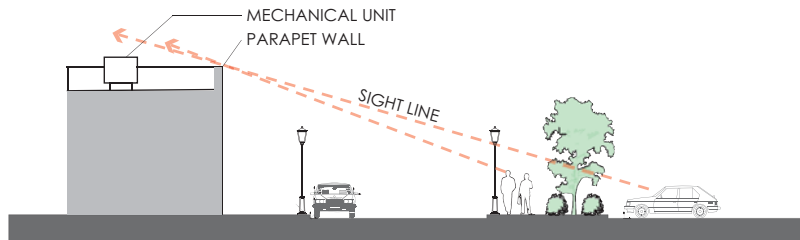
## SITE DESIGN



- 1 Service areas should not be oriented to main roadways or the main elevation of adjacent development. Screen service areas with building mass or an appropriate screen wall.



- 2 A compatible screen is constructed using the same materials and details as the main building.



- 3 Screen rooftop mechanical units with an extension of the facade wall or a compatible screen wall.

## SERVICE AREAS

Outdoor service areas are necessary for support functions such as loading and storage areas, on-site utilities, mechanical units, and garbage containers. When locating service areas, strive to lessen the visibility and impact on pedestrians and neighboring development.

- 1 **Service areas should not be oriented towards adjoining developments.**
  - Mechanical equipment, service or storage areas and trash receptacles should not have frontage on main roadways or be visible from the main elevation.
  - If possible, delivery and loading areas should be located at a façade which is not publicly visible.
- 2 **Service areas should be screened from view.**
  - A wall compatible with the building finish and design may be used to define and screen a support area. The wall should adhere to architectural guidelines for material and articulation.
  - The use of a landscaped area or berms may also provide adequate screening.
- 3 **Locate mechanical units to reduce noise impacts and decrease visibility.**
  - Rooftop Mechanical Units should be screened by architectural features compatible with the building façade and architecture.
  - Mechanical penthouses should be integrated with the overall building design and use materials that are compatible with the building.
  - Screen mechanical units that are located at ground level.
  - Place mechanical units as far as possible from residential uses to reduce noise impacts.



## SITE ELEMENTS

The landscape guidelines utilize planting, site walls and fencing to define the character of Route 50 corridor. These elements provide effective screening and create a consistent design character element to tie together new and existing development. Site elements should be integrated with the design of the building and neighboring development.

- 1 Distinct site walls and fencing may be used to mark an entrance and define a gateway.**
  - Use site walls and fences to define roadway edges and transitions.
- 2 Use site walls or fences in combination with planting to create visual screens.**
  - Screen walls should be consistent with the material palette and design of the development or building.
- 3 Site walls, fencing and screen walls should be consistent with design guidelines for buildings.**
  - Elements longer than 50 feet should be divided with piers or landscaping at an interval consistent with the adjacent buildings.

## SITE DESIGN



**1** The entrance of South Riding is marked with distinctive signage and fencing.

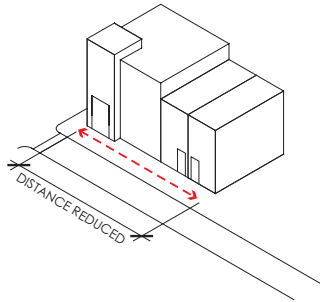
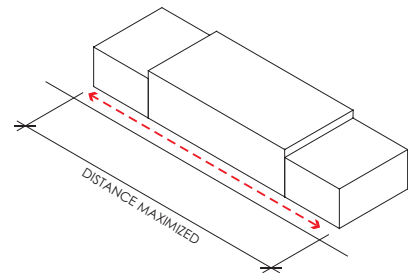


**2** Site utilities are screened with site walls and evergreen planting.

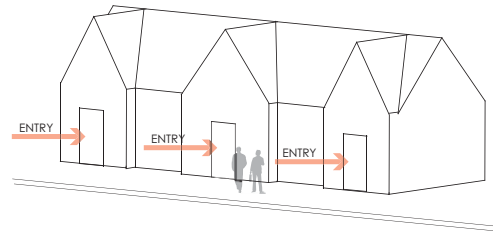
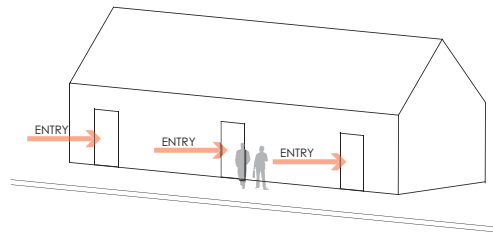


**3** A compatible screen wall and gate is used to screen a service area.

## BUILDING DESIGN



- 1 Typical strip development maximizes retail frontage and walking distances.  
  
Compact development reduces walking distances and creates an opportunity to define space with building form.



- 2 Roof form provides scale by dividing a large building into separate forms. The articulation of the roof highlights the entrance.



- 3 The roof line is emphasized with a continuous cornice and the entrance is highlighted with a parapet extension



- 4 A green standing seam metal roof adds color and texture.

## BUILDING DESIGN

Buildings should be designed to:

- Convey a sense of human scale
- Use high quality materials and construction
- Provide storefront or display windows at walkways
- Cover walkways with awnings or an arcade
- Emphasize the entrance with architectural features

## FORM & ROOFLINE

### 1 Compact and efficient forms enhance pedestrian environments.

- Pedestrian activity is increased when travel distances are reduced. The frontage of large scale functions should be limited to reduce travel distances between spaces.
- Mixed use developments should be designed to maximize activity; increasing building height is preferable to an expansive footprint.

### 2 Articulate roof form to enhance the scale and design of the building.

- The perception of building form and mass may be manipulated with variation in roof composition.
- A change in roof form or height can be used to emphasize an entrance or create a covered walkway.
- A long expanse of roof should be avoided, divide roof form with dormers, cupolas, or a change in roof line.

### 3 Articulate a flat roof at the building façade with a cornice or parapet.

- The parapet should extend as necessary to conceal roof top equipment.

### 4 Use roof materials that provide texture, pattern and color.

- Traditional building materials are modular; standing seam metal roofs, tiles and shakes create a texture or pattern with the placement of individual pieces. The pattern contributes to an overall sense of scale and quality.

The appeal of mixed use development is the synergy of complementary functions: business, services, retail and residential. The challenge is to balance a range of building types, the efficiency of large development and a need for human scale. The following suggestions are concerned with creating transitions between diverse building types using elements of complementary scale.

**1 Reduce the perception of mass by modulating building form.**

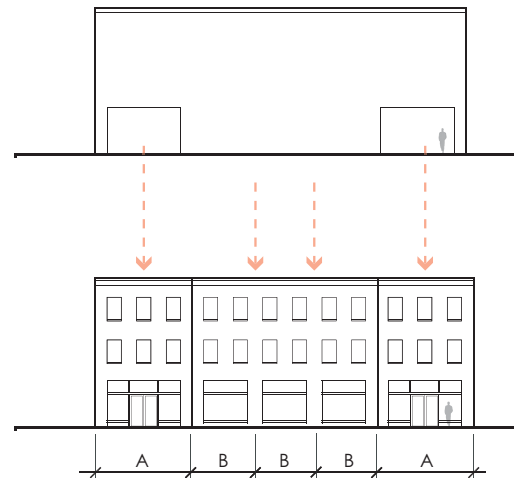
- The building form may be manipulated by dividing a large mass into a composition of smaller forms or modules.
- The smaller forms may be expressed with variations in wall surface, height or roof forms.
- Consider the scale of neighboring development and the size and function of the building to determine module sizes. In general, buildings located along pedestrian walkways should use smaller modules.

**2 Building composition should be appropriate to its site and context.**

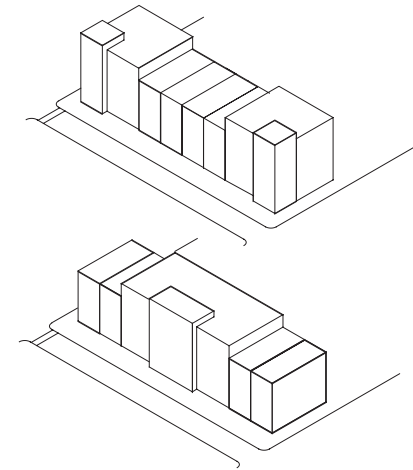
- Arrange building masses to create focal points at the corners or cores of a development.
- Compose large developments with modular elements of varying size and height to create transitions to neighboring developments.

**3 Create transitions by recreating similar form, scale and articulation.**

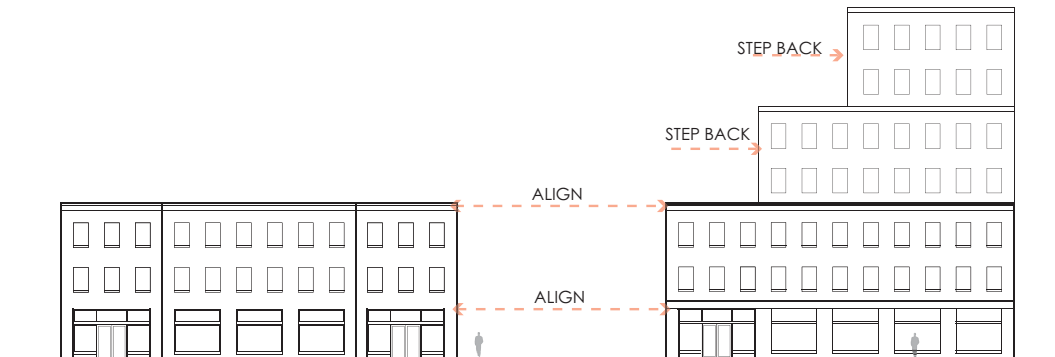
- Relate large buildings to smaller scale buildings by recreating similarly sized modules and forms.
- Relate buildings of varying heights by aligning consistent horizontal elements such as their storefronts, decorative trim or upper level openings.



- 1** Avoid large, unarticulated masses.  
Divide a large building into a composition of smaller forms.

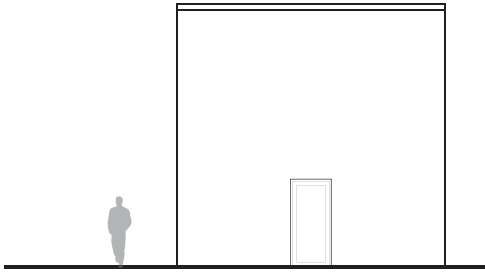


- 2** Arrange building form to complement its context.  
A distinct corner element marks an intersection.  
  
A central mass that steps down to the corners creates a focal point and transitions to smaller adjacent development.



- 3** Create transitions by aligning horizontal elements where possible.  
Use massing techniques to relate buildings of different height and form.

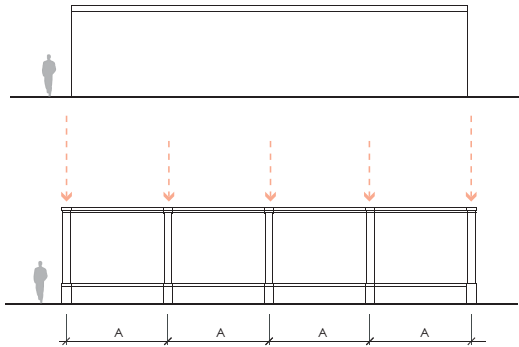
## BUILDING DESIGN



- 1 A facade without detail or articulation detracts from the public realm and provides no sense of scale.



Reinforce the streetscape by articulating facades to create a base, middle and top. In public buildings, the base should relate to pedestrian scale, provide display windows and highlight the entrance.



- 2 Use vertical elements to divide a long expanse of wall. A structural pier or projecting bay can be used to introduce a form and material change in the vertical plane.

## FAÇADE

Elevations should convey classical and regular proportions that relate to human scale. The following recommendations address building scale at the level of detail:

- Articulation
- Building Entrances & Windows
- Architectural Elements

### ARTICULATION

The articulation of building facades with distinct architectural detail contributes to the design character of an area. A pedestrian oriented environment is reinforced when detail is proportioned to human scale, not the size or function of a building.

#### 1 Articulate facades to create a base, middle and top.

- Use variations in wall surface to create horizontal divisions.
- Delineate the base, middle and top of a building with contrasting materials for elements such as water tables, wall and eaves or cornices.

#### 2 Use vertical elements to create modules in long expanses of wall.

- Vertical expression of structural piers divides a wall into properly scaled elements.
- Avoid a change of material in the vertical plane except when accompanied by a variation in form.





**3 Use material changes to reinforce scale and provide visual interest.**

- The perception of mass may be moderated by the articulation of building surfaces with architectural elements and details.
- Use different materials for architectural elements such as water tables, sills, lintels, and eaves to create contrast and delineate forms.
- Horizontal material changes at door height or floor level provides a reference to human scale.
- Choose facade materials that contribute a texture or pattern to avoid flat, monotonous surfaces.

**4 Avoid blank, unarticulated walls**

- Any elevation that is publicly visible should adhere to the design guidelines and be consistent with the main elevation.
- Each elevation should be constructed using similar colors, materials, windows and decorative accents.

**5 Compose building materials to create variations in weight and texture.**

- Building materials should be composed intuitively. Use heavier or larger patterns at the base and lighter or finer materials above.
- Horizontal changes of materials should be avoided except as needed to express a structural pier or to highlight an addition.



**3** Material changes highlight building design - reinforcing the entrance, edge, corner and contribute a sense of scale to the streetscape.

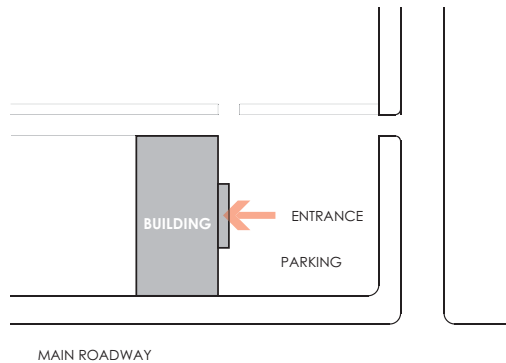


**4** A continuous water table, pilasters and cornice articulate each building elevation. Horizontal and vertical elements provide form and material changes preventing a long, blank wall.

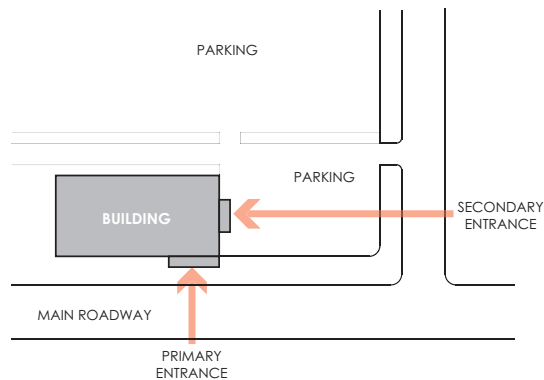


**5** Form and material change highlight base, wall and cornice details.

## BUILDING DESIGN



Avoid orienting the primary entrance to secondary streets or parking.



- 1 Orient the primary entrance to the most prominent elevation or to connect with the pedestrian walkway.



- 2 Emphasize the primary entrance with an architectural feature such as an awning or a recessed transition space.

### IMPLEMENTATION : NEW DEVELOPMENT

## BUILDING ENTRANCES & WINDOWS

The design of building entrances and windows should be defined by the context and function of a building. The proportion and arrangement of building openings defines a relationship between the street, building and pedestrian. The entrance should be prominent and identifiable along the street but scaled to the pedestrian.

### 1 The primary entrance should be oriented to the street.

- A building may have more than one orientation if the site has street frontage on two roadways. The elevations should be composed in hierarchy with the primary entrance located on the most prominent elevation.
- A secondary entrance may be oriented to minor roadways, interior blocks or parking lots for convenience.
- Retail and mixed use development should orient an elevation to adjoining developments and neighborhoods.

### 2 Clearly define the primary entrance.

- A recessed entry provides a protected transition area and highlights the main entrance.
- An awning or roof feature can be used to create an entrance feature.
- Paving or other decorative elements help reinforce an entry feature.

**3 Create a consistent pattern of openings that reinforces the primary entrance.**

- A regular pattern of openings and prominent entry is consistent with the design heritage of the area; traditional window proportions are square or vertical.
- Proportion openings to create a hierarchy that emphasizes the main elevation and entrance.
- The pattern and proportion of openings should be consistent on all visible elevations and between separate buildings in a development.



**4 Enhance the streetscape by providing large display windows.**

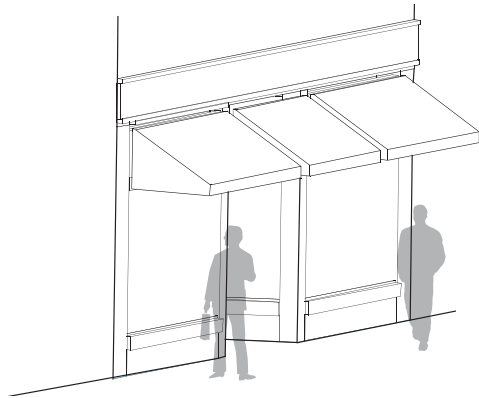
- Elevations along pedestrian walkways should have large display windows or storefront to engage pedestrian interest. Reinforce the hierarchy of the display windows by limiting openings on upper levels.

**3 Create a regular pattern of openings that emphasizes the main entrance. Strive to create connections with adjacent buildings by relating openings and details.**



**4 Create a storefront zone at street level to encourage pedestrian activity.**

## BUILDING DESIGN



- 1** Awnings are an element of facade design and should be integrated with openings to complement building design.



Awnings provide a protected pedestrian zone and emphasize display windows.

## ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS

A common use of architectural elements contributes to the character of an area. Architectural elements help moderate building scale by creating depth and contrast.

**1 Awnings should be integrated with façade openings and the overall building design.**

- Awnings are encouraged as a component of the streetscape design. Awnings create a threshold space to transition indoors and outdoors.
- Awnings may be used to create a covered pedestrian zone and encourage movement among adjacent destinations in inclement weather.
- Awning colors should be chosen as part of the overall color scheme.

**2 Gas Canopies should be considered an element of the overall design theme.**

- Gas canopies should use forms, colors and materials that complement the adjacent building design.



- 2 DO THIS**  
Complement adjacent development by using compatible forms and colors.



**AVOID THIS**  
The gas canopy is not coordinated with adjacent development, it varies in form and color.



## MATERIAL & COLOR

Material and color are the primary characteristics of a building and enhance architecture by contributing texture, pattern and contrast.

### 1 Use natural and durable materials to convey a sense of tradition and permanence.

- The use of natural stone, brick and wood for primary façade materials is encouraged.
- The use of split-face block, finished concrete, natural stone, ceramic tile, stucco, wood or metal is acceptable for secondary elevations or trim and accents.
- The use of standard concrete block and metal siding is discouraged. Synthetic materials, such as EIFS, may be used as an accent but is discouraged as a primary building material.
- Matte surfaces are preferred; highly polished, glossy or reflective surfaces should be avoided.

### 2 Each elevation should be constructed using similar materials and details.

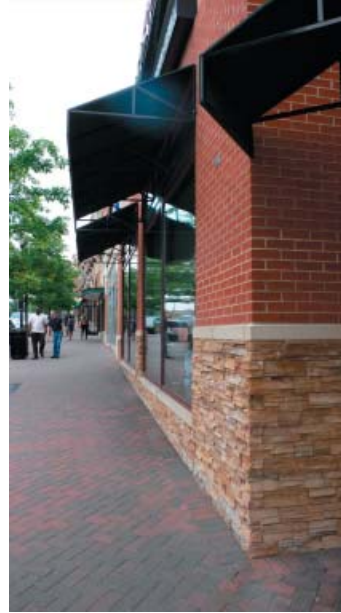
- Each publicly visible elevation should be consistent with the main elevation. Continue windows and decorative accents to avoid a blank wall.
- Use similar materials and details to link buildings of different forms, scale and functions.

### 3 Traditional roof forms and materials are preferred.

- The use of standing seam metal roofs, ceramic roof tiles, slate and wood shingles is preferred.
- The use of asphalt shingles and variegated color is discouraged.

### 4 A coordinated color palette should be created for each development.

- Major wall and roof elements should be limited to soft neutral colors and natural material colors, bold colors may be used for trim and accents.



1 Stone and brick create texture and pattern variation on this wall.



2 The front and side of this building are finished in similar materials.



3 A standing seam metal roof provides color and texture.



## NEXT STEPS

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### NEXT STEPS

The Route 50 corridor is envisioned as a gateway to western Loudoun County - a mixed use district with unified development of complementary scale, material and form. Landscape and architectural guidelines will support this effort by creating consistency and transition to promote a sense of place.

The Route 50 Corridor Design Guidelines are planned to have a five year revision and a ten year update. As the guidelines are implemented, it is likely that conflicts and errors will be revealed. The purpose of the five year revision is to make corrections and clarify the intent and application of the guidelines. The ten year update is intended to be a comprehensive review of the guidelines goals and strategies. It is anticipated that construction of the parallel road network and new development will raise new concerns and new opportunities to refine the goals of the community.

**PHOTO CREDITS**

Aldie and Middleburg  
Loudoun County

South Riding  
Loudoun County

Stone Ridge Village Center  
Loudoun County

Market Station at Tuscarora Mill  
Leesburg, Virginia

Fairfax Common  
Fairfax, Virginia

The Market Common  
Clarendon, Arlington, Virginia

Pentagon Row  
Arlington, Virginia

Village at Shirlington  
Arlington, Virginia

Creekside Station  
Winchester, Virginia